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ABSTRACT

This guide describes the services necessary to support effective paraeducator services in accredited Iowa schools. A paraeducator is defined as an employee who works under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel who have the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs. It is intended to help schools improve services to children and comply with rules and regulations. The guide targets local education agency personnel, parents, community colleges, colleges, and universities. The contents are: section 1, "Introduction"; section 2, "Rules and Regulations: What are the Federal and State Requirements Regarding Paraeducator Services?"; section 3, " Suggested Guidelines for Implementation of Effective Paraeducator Services in Educational Settings"; section 4, "Recommended Strategies: What Can Agencies Do To Improve Paraeducator Services in Educational Settings?" and section 5, "The IEP (Individualized Education Program): What are the Considerations for Implementing Paraprofessional Services in Special Education?" Seven appendixes include: Statements of Beliefs and Vision; Statutes and Rules Related to the Employment and Training of Paraprofessionals in Educational Settings; Paraeducator Project Stakeholders; Core Competencies for Paraeducators; Suggested Training Topics; Suggested Code of Ethics; and Examples of Duties for Paraeducator Positions. Three handouts are included: Paraeducator Fact Sheet; Suggested Checklist for Principals; and A Family Guide to Paraeducator Services. (SM)

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Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa

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paraeducator /par'e e-je'-ka-ter/ n: An employee who works under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel who have the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs. An employee whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct or indirect services to children, youth and/or their parents. *Syn.*, paraprofessional, educational aide, instructional aide.

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Beliefs

The value of paraeducators and the complexity of their roles are recognized as important to the success of the school.

Paraeducators are respected and valued members of the educational team.

Paraeducators are critical to the social, emotional, academic, and vocational success of children and youth.

Paraeducators play an active and essential role in their work with children and youth by providing encouragement, support, assistance, and advocacy.

Communication among paraeducators, licensed personnel, and parents is carefully planned and carried out.

Paraeducators understand the needs of children and youth and have the specialized training to meet student needs.

All paraeducators are provided with training prior to initiating services and ongoing staff development to keep updated on best practices and current, effective strategies.

Paraeducators have a professional identity and advocate for their profession by maintaining positive, supportive, cooperative, and professional relationships.

Teachers, administrators and other members of the educational team enable paraeducators to be effective in their work by providing resources, support, feedback, and assistance.

Leaders at the state, regional, district, and building level provide the systems level support and resources to enable paraeducators to be effective in their work.

Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
1998

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Table of Contents

Introduction: What Is The Purpose Of This Guide? ..... Page 1

Rules and Regulations: What Are The Federal And State Requirements Regarding Paraeducator Services? ..... Page 5

Suggested Guidelines For Implementation Of Effective Paraeducator Services In Educational Settings ..... Page 7

Recommended Strategies: What Can Agencies Do To Improve Paraeducator Services In Educational Settings? ..... Page 12

The IEP: What Are The Considerations For Implementing Paraprofessional Services In Special Education? ..... Page 18

Appendices ..... Page 27

A. Statements Of Beliefs And Vision ..... Page 29

B. Statutes And Rules Related To The Employment And Training Of Paraprofessionals In Educational Settings ..... Page 32

C. Paraeducator Project Stakeholders ..... Page 42

D. Core Competencies For Paraeducators ..... Page 45

E. Suggested Training Topics ..... Page 49

F. Suggested Code Of Ethics ..... Page 51

G. Examples Of Duties For Paraeducator Positions ..... Page 53

Handouts ..... Page 55

Paraeducator Fact Sheet

Suggested Checklist For Principals

A Family Guide To Paraeducator Services

References ..... Page 65

Guide For Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa

Introduction

What Is The Purpose Of This Guide?

This guide describes the services that are necessary to support effective paraeducator services in accredited Iowa schools. It is intended to assist schools in improving services to children as well as complying with rules and regulations. Refining practices to maximize the effectiveness of paraeducators will ideally result in better teaming, improved instruction and support to children and youth, greater resources for teachers, and ultimately improved student achievement.

Encourage dialogue among teachers, paraeducators, and others

The guidelines offered in this document are intended to serve as a prototype for local adoption and as a framework for dialogue. Local education agencies (LEAs) and area education agencies (AEAs) are encouraged to provide paraeducators, teachers, administrators, parents, and children and youth with opportunities for dialogue about guidelines for effective paraeducator services. The guidelines may be modified with local input to reflect the priorities and values of the agency and may be formally adopted as LEA or AEA statements of effective practice for service.

What Is A Paraeducator?

Paraeducators are essential members of the educational team serving Iowa's children and youth. They work under the supervision of teachers or other licensed personnel who have the ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of education and related service programs. They provide assistance to a variety of children and youth including those with and without disabilities, those with health needs, those with limited English and others. (See Appendix G for examples of paraeducator duties.) Paraeducators work in a range of educational settings including the general education classroom, special education settings, lunchrooms, playgrounds, school buses, vocational work sites, computer labs, and school media centers. They are employed in early childhood, elementary, middle school, secondary school programs and residential educational facilities. They provide a resource that contributes significantly to the success of individual children and youth, schools, and educational programs. There are over 5,000 paraeducators working in schools and other educational settings in Iowa. Nationwide there are approximately half a million paraeducators serving in educational roles.

Over 5,000 paraeducators in Iowa

Among the titles used to describe paraeducators in educational settings are such terms as: paraprofessional, educational aide, instructional aide, teacher associ

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ate, native language tutor, media associate, clerk, health paraprofessional, office interventionist, and library assistant. In today's schools individuals filling these positions are technicians who might be more aptly described as *paraeducators* just as their counterparts in law and medicine are designated paralegals and paramedics. (For more information about paraeducators, see the Paraeducator Fact Sheet in the section entitled *Handouts*.)

Definitions addressing specific special education assignments are given in *Iowa Statutes and Rules Related to the Employment and Training of Paraprofessionals in Educational Settings* (Appendix E).

Variety of constituents contributed

Although this document focuses on the roles of paraeducators and it advocates for effective paraeducator services, there is no intent to suggest that paraeducators are any more important than individuals in other roles and assignments. The guidelines described in this document could be adapted for other nonlicensed personnel in schools.

Who Developed The Guide?

This document has been developed with input from a variety of constituents from local education agencies, area education agencies, community colleges and the Department of Education. The constituents included paraeducators, teachers, parents, and administrators. (See Appendix C.) Portions of the materials are based on the ongoing work of stakeholders who began meeting in February of 1996. Other groups that have shared ideas and suggestions for improving services of paraeducators include:

- Parent-Educator Connection
- Directors of Special Education, Area Education Agencies
- Urban Education Network
- Iowa Behavioral Initiative Specialized Instructional Services Network
- Iowa Department of Education Staff

Adopt district guidelines for effective paraeducator services

The Iowa Learning Resource Network (I-LRN), a program funded by the Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, facilitated discussions, gathered ideas, developed draft language and, with input, revised the publication.

How Should The Guide Be Used?

This guide is meant to serve as a resource for local and area education agency personnel, parents, community colleges, colleges, and universities. Potential uses include:

- A reference for requirements established by state and federal rules and regulations.

- A tool to assist local district personnel in developing and adopting local district guidelines for effective paraeducator practices.
- A resource for reviewing district policies and practices, for planning paraeducator staff development, and for considering resource allocation.
- A resource for the design of training for teachers and school administrators.
- A resource to enhance communication among parents, paraeducators, and teachers.

Administrators play a critical role

What Can Principals And District Administrators Do To Implement The *Guide For Effective Paraeducator Practices In Iowa?*

School administrators play a critical role in supervising and supporting the work of paraeducators. School principals and district administrators may use this guide as a tool for developing appropriate paraeducator services in their buildings or local districts. Suggested steps for using the *Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa* follow.

1) Review the contents of the guide.

2) Study the requirements for paraeducator services. See the following chapters:
   a) *Rules and Regulations: What Are The Federal And State Requirements Regarding Paraeducator Services?*
   b) *The IEP: What Are The Considerations For Implementing Paraprofessional Services In Special Education?*
   c) Appendix B: *Statutes And Rules Related To The Employment And Training Of Paraprofessionals In Educational Settings*

3) Form a building or district level committee with paraeducators, teachers, other building personnel and parents to:

   a) develop beliefs and a vision for paraeducator services. (See Appendix A.)
   b) review chapter entitled *Suggested Guidelines For Implementation Of Effective Paraeducator Services In Educational Settings.*
   c) develop proposed building or district level guidelines for effective practice.
   d) finalize and approve guidelines for effective practice.

4) Work with building or district level committee to review building or district-level policies and practices in order to identify those that do and those that do not support the implementation of these guidelines. Make recommendations for alternative policies and practices.

5) Revise policies and practices to comply with rules and regulations and recommendations for effective practice.

6) Develop and use a checklist for reviewing building or district practices. (See section entitled *Handouts* for the Suggested Checklist for Principals.)

Resources For Principals And District Administrators

Long, Carol A. *Piecing together the paraprofessional puzzle: A handbook for the orientation and training of first year paraprofessionals.* 1996. Wisconsin Edition by Anne Rodgers-Rhyme. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Madison, WI.

Pickett, Anna Lou and H. Gerlach. *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach.* 1997. Pro-ed. Austin TX.

Pickett, Anna Lou. *Improving the performance of paraeducators in the workforce. A technical assistance manual for administrators and staff developers.* 1993. The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services. Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate School and University Center. City University of New York, New York, NY.

To preview these materials contact:

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Area Education Agencies (AEAs) have many resources available to principals. Each AEA has a contact person who can provide information about AEA resources that pertain to paraeducator issues.

Rules and Regulations

What Are The Federal And State Requirements Regarding Paraeducator Services?

A variety of federal and state rules and regulations for AEAs and LEAs address paraeducator positions and staff development. Appendix B provides specific rule language pertaining to paraeducator services in Iowa.

Iowa Administrative Code

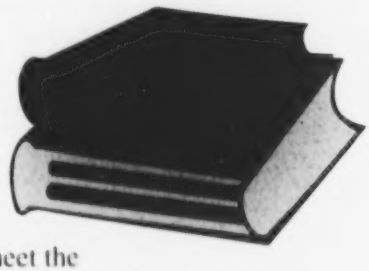
Authorizing and Defining Positions: The Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) authorizes the employment of and defines the following positions: paraprofessionals (281– 41.10(256B) IAC); other special education assistants (281– 41.10(2) IAC); educational aides (281–12.4(9) IAC); and Title I instructional aides (Sec. 1119 Professional Development Title I Handbook (20 USC 6320)).

Inservice Training Program for Newly Hired Paraeducators: Additional regulations describe requirements for training paraeducators. Iowa Administrative Code 281–12.4(9) requires that newly hired paraeducators [educational aides] must complete an inservice training program during their first year of employment.

Three-Year Staff Development Plan with Annual Objectives and Strategies: Each local district is required to have a staff development plan for school personnel including paraeducators [educational aides]. This plan must include general goals for a three-year period and specific objectives and strategies for the current year (281–12.7(1) IAC). School boards are required to annually budget specified funds to support the staff development plan.

Administrative Rules of Special Education

Special Education Requirements: Iowa's *Administrative Rules of Special Education* has language that mandates that paraeducators complete preservice and continuing education specific to the functions to be performed. This rule specifies that appropriate training must be completed prior to the beginning of service wherever practicable and within a reasonable time of the beginning of service where the pre-entry completion is not practicable. The rules also require that AEAs have Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) plans to describe procedures and activities to ensure an adequate supply of personnel. Paraeducators are to be provided with continuing education to enable them to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities who are eligible for services.



Title I Requirements: Federal Title I rules require that each local district receiving Title I funds shall include paraeducators [instructional aides] in

professional development. The rules also create an option for establishing a career ladder program for paraeducators (Sec. 1119 Professional Development Title I Handbook (E-133)).

Title I

Staff Development Requirements for All Personnel: The Iowa Administrative Code stipulates training for all school personnel in the following areas:

—hazardous chemicals (347–120.6 IAC Section 89B.10)
—multicultural non-sexist approaches to education programs (281–12.5 (8))
—technology (281–12.5 (10))
—school personnel who serve at-risk children and youth receive inservice training (281–12.5(13)).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 1997: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 is a federal law which requires each state to have in effect a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development that is designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special education, general education, and related services personnel, including paraprofessionals. State education agencies are required to establish and maintain personnel standards to ensure personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. These standards are to be consistent with state laws, regulations, and policies. Rule language has been added that allows paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained to assist in the provision of special education.

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Suggested Guidelines For The Implementation Of Effective Paraeducator Services In Educational Settings*

This section contains recommended guidelines for making paraeducator services more effective. It is intended to facilitate decision-making by various readers. The guidelines may be considered a tool to assist in developing and adopting standards for effective paraeducator practices. The guidelines are based on the spirit and convictions expressed in the beliefs and vision statements which were developed with input from a variety of constituents. (See Appendix A for a complete list of the belief and vision statements and Appendix C for a list of the individuals who contributed to their development.)

Guideline 1: The Paraeducator And The Instructional Team

Paraeducators are respected and supported as team members responsible for assisting licensed staff in the delivery of instruction, support, and related services.

Examples of Implementation

A. In selecting and designing instructional programs, the roles of participating licensed staff and paraeducators are an important consideration in program planning.

B. In designing instructional programs, district personnel have defined the roles of participating licensed staff as the instructional leaders and paraeducators as the assisting personnel.

C. Communication among licensed staff, paraeducators, and parents is planned and carried out.

D. Parents are well informed about the role of the paraeducator in the implementation of their child's program.

E. Common planning time is provided for team members, including paraeducators.

F. School district (or AEA) newsletters, staff development activities, and other communications include information for and about

*The draft guidelines from the states of Utah and Washington were used as prototypes for designing the Iowa guidelines.

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paraeducators. All such district communications are distributed to paraeducators.

Guideline 2: Role Clarification

The entire instructional team participates within clearly defined roles to provide an appropriate educational program for children and youth.

Examples of Implementation

A. A written, up-to-date job description for each paraeducator is provided to the paraeducator and designated supervisor of the paraeducator. Job descriptions specifically define job expectations and serve as a basis for evaluation.

B The role of the supervisor is clearly defined.

C. Paraeducators are regularly involved in planning but are not responsible for planning the instructional program for children and youth.

D. Paraeducators are not required to assume responsibilities assigned to licensed staff, such as developing IEP goals, creating lesson plans, formally evaluating children and youth, modifying lesson plans without supervision. Paraeducators should not be assigned to serve as a substitute teacher unless the paraeducator holds the appropriate teaching license and endorsement or a substitute teaching license. The conditions of employment must provide for the paraeducator to work as a substitute teacher.

E. Clearly written procedures for routine and emergency tasks for paraeducators and licensed staff members are in place.

Guideline 3: Supervision

Paraeducators receive appropriate supervision to ensure the delivery of effective educational services to children and youth.

Examples of Implementation

A. Paraeducators are supervised by a designated, licensed staff member, according to state rules and regulations.

B. Procedures are in place for structured, systematic management, supervision, and evaluation of paraeducators.

C. Supervision supports the professional growth of the paraeducator and

includes opportunity for self-evaluation and input by the paraeducator.

Guideline 4: Staff Development Of Paraeducators

To ensure quality education for children and youth and appropriate safety for children, youth, and staff, paraeducators are provided with an agency orientation and ongoing staff development commensurate with their responsibilities. Suggested competencies are listed in Appendix D.

Examples of Implementation

A. Paraeducators receive inservice training during the initial year of employment. (See related Iowa Code 281.12.7(1) in appendix entitled *Statutes And Rules Related To The Employment And Training Of Paraprofessionals In Educational Settings.)*

B. Paraeducators receive training in core areas relating to their responsibilities as well as areas specific to their job assignments. This training may be provided by the district, AEA, community college, university, or other appropriate agency. Suggested competencies are listed in Appendix D.

C. Paraeducators are included in district/AEA staff development programs.

D. Paraeducators are trained with licensed staff whenever possible to provide common understanding and effective teamwork.

E. Training needs are assessed periodically.

F. A written plan for staff development is in place. (See related Iowa Code 281.12.4(9) in Appendix B.)

Guideline 5: Staff Development Of Licensed Staff In Supervisory Roles

Licensed staff are sufficiently trained in supervisory skills to work with paraeducators.

Examples of Implementation

A. Licensed staff members receive staff development in the supervision of paraeducators prior to being assigned to direct, support, or supervise a paraeducator.

B. Suggested training areas for teachers and administrators meet the supervisory needs of their roles. (See Appendix E.)

C. Licensed staff receive the same content training as the paraeducators with whom they work, ideally at the same time.

Guideline 6: Administrator Support

Administrators provide support for effective paraeducator services.

Examples of Implementation

A. Administrators are well informed about how appropriate paraeducator services should be implemented and what situations require the assignment of a paraeducator.

B. Administrators inform the school board of the changing roles and responsibilities of paraeducators.

C. Administrators assume an active and substantive role in overseeing the participation of paraeducators in effective instructional programs.

D. Administrators provide leadership to the teaming process which enables paraeducators to be partners in planning and delivering services.

E. Administrators create a work schedule which provides time for regular, organized and systematic communication among the paraeducators and other members of the instructional team.

F. Time, funding, and other resources are provided to enable paraeducators to participate in staff development, meetings, and other opportunities for communication.

Guideline 7: Ethical Responsibilities

Paraeducators and licensed staff consistently practice ethical behaviors required of their position.

Examples of Implementation

A. See *Suggested Code of Ethics* in Appendix F. 16

B. Adopt code of ethics for the local district or building

Guideline 8: Policies And Procedures

Policies and procedures recognize and support paraeducators as integral partners in providing educational services.

Examples of Implementation

A. Policies and procedures are adopted and implemented by a variety of constituents including paraeducators, parents, teachers, administrators, children and youth, and community members.

B. Policies and procedures recognize the strengths and needs of paraeducators within the service delivery context.

C. Policy-makers regularly review the implementation of policies and guidelines and make recommendations for change as appropriate.

Guideline 9: Career Opportunities And Compensation

Paraeducators are provided with opportunities for advancement and adequate compensation.

Examples of Implementation

A. Paraeducators are provided with pay commensurate with responsibilities, experience, and training.

B. Opportunities for career development and advancement are available and accessible.

Recommended Strategies

What Can Agencies Do To Improve Paraeducator Services In Educational Settings?

The following recommended strategies for improving paraeducator services and increasing training opportunities were generated through the work of two groups of stakeholders convened by the Iowa Learning Resource Network in 1996 and 1997. (See Appendix C for names of participants.) The stakeholders included representatives of the Bureau of Special Education (BSE), AEAs, LEAs, community colleges, and parents. The strategies are designed for specific target groups including AEAs, LEAs and institutions of higher education (IHE).*

Area Education Agencies

Recommendations For Addressing Systems Level Issues

AEA recommendations

- Review agency planning documents to determine whether mission, vision and goal statements apply to paraeducators. If paraeducators are not included in agency plans, should they be? If they are, is there evidence that they are being involved in the implementation of the plan?
- Include paraeducator needs and staff development priorities in the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) section of the AEA plan.
- Review existing initiatives underway within the AEA (e.g., Iowa Behavioral Initiative, other school improvement projects, etc.). Are the roles and needs of paraeducators being addressed in the planning and implementation? If appropriate, plan ways the AEA can increase training opportunities to paraeducators to make sure the initiatives are implemented effectively with the involvement of paraeducators.
- Ensure that each paraeducator employed in the AEA has a written job description.
- Advocate that paraeducators employed by LEAs have written job descriptions.
- Adopt and implement effective practice guidelines for AEA personnel.

* The phrase "institutions of higher education (IHE)" refers to colleges, universities and community colleges.

Recommendations For Increasing Collaboration And Communication

AEA recommendations continued

- Publish an AEA paraeducator newsletter or articles in other publications.
- Establish local paraeducator network or advisory group.
- Create a directory of paraeducators employed by AEA and LEAs to facilitate the dissemination of information and the collection of needs assessment data by those agencies.
- Establish a system for disseminating print materials to paraeducators in the field (e.g., announcements about training, needs assessment instruments, newsletters and other publications).
- Include paraeducators on relevant stakeholder and advisory groups.
- Collaborate with the Parent-Educator Connection (PEC) to increase information disseminated to parents about paraeducators and to share resources and ideas with PEC coordinators.

Staff Development Recommendations For Paraeducators And Individuals Who Supervise Paraeducators

- Create a work group to help plan and deliver staff development for LEA and AEA personnel.
- Invite paraeducators to AEA workshops already being offered — encourage partnerships with the teacher and paraeducator attending as a team.
- Expand AEA catalog of staff development offerings. Add sessions just for paraeducators and encourage paraeducators to attend sessions designed for teachers.
- Include paraeducators in needs assessment efforts to measure needs and collect data on issues.
- Offer an AEA conference or regional conferences for AEA and LEA personnel.
- Hold leadership seminar with principals, supervisors and others to discuss paraeducator issues.
- Work with IHEs to offer inservice and preservice training.
- Explore distance learning options such as ICN classes, self-directed study using the Internet, etc.

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AEA recommendations continued

- Provide paraeducator training materials in AEA media collections.
- Collaborate with the Iowa Behavioral Initiative to increase staff development opportunities about behavioral issues.

Local Education Agencies

Recommendations For Addressing Systems Level Issues

LEA recommendations

- Review district planning documents to determine whether mission, vision and goal statements apply to paraeducators. If paraeducators are not included in district plans, should they be? If they are, is there evidence that they are being involved in the implementation of the plan?
- Review existing initiatives underway within the district, e.g., site based management, school improvement plans, etc. Are paraeducators' roles and needs being addressed in the planning and implementation? If appropriate, plan ways the district can increase training opportunities to paraeducators to make sure the initiative is implemented effectively by paraeducators.
- Ensure that each paraeducator employed in the district has a written job description.
- Develop or adopt effective practice guidelines for paraeducator services in the district.
- Analyze systems issues to enable paraeducators to attend training and participate in planning (for example, school calendars, staff development schedules, budgets, classroom coverage).
- Consider recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain competent paraeducators.

Recommendations For Increasing Collaboration And Communication

- Disseminate information to paraeducators using newsletters, articles, or district letter, e.g., announcements about training, needs assessment instruments, topics of interest to paraeducators.
- Establish a system for disseminating print materials to paraeducators in the field.
- Establish local paraeducator network or advisory group.
- Include paraeducators on relevant stakeholder and advisory groups.
- Conduct a community public relations campaign about the value of paraeducators (newspaper, TV, radio).
- Inform school board about the positive work of paraeducators in the district.
- Share relevant information about paraeducator services with parents.
- Include paraeducators in building level staff meetings, as appropriate.

LEA recommendations continued

Staff Development Recommendations For Paraeducators And Individuals Who Supervise Paraeducators

- Invite paraeducators to staff development activities offered to teachers—encourage partnerships with the teacher and paraeducator attending as a team.
- Offer staff development activities designed specifically for paraeducators (for example, distance learning classes, study groups, self-study using video and print training materials).
- Include paraeducators in needs assessment efforts to measure needs and collect data on paraeducator issues.
- Provide training to administrators, teachers, and other licensed personnel in how to supervise and support paraeducators.
- Work with community colleges, colleges and universities to offer inservice and preservice training.
- Provide time and resources for staff development before paraeducators begin their assignment and ongoing staff development thereafter.
- Collaborate with other districts to co-host training events.

- Ensure that the required staff development plan for paraeducators is current and that goals, objectives, and activities are being implemented. (See requirements 281-12.7(1) IAC in Appendix B.)
- Provide staff development opportunities for substitute paraeducators.

LEA recommendations continued

Institutions of Higher Education

Recommendations For Increasing Collaborative Efforts Among IHEs And Other Education Agencies

- Establish linkages among AEAs, LEAs, and IHEs to increase preservice and inservice opportunities for paraeducators and those who supervise and direct paraeducators.
- Increase collaboration among LEAs, AEAs, Iowa Department of Education and others in order to offer more preservice and inservice opportunities for paraeducators.
- Develop and disseminate a position paper describing the role IHEs play in preparing teachers, administrators and paraeducators to work together in educational settings.
- Collaborate with the Department of Education, AEAs, and LEAs to determine skills needed for teachers and administrators to direct and supervise paraeducators.

IHE recommendations

Recommendations For Providing And/Or Facilitating Preservice And Inservice Training For Paraeducators And Individuals Who Supervise Paraeducators

- Develop supports to enable paraeducators to access continuing education in order to pursue careers in education.
- Increase practicum opportunities and field experiences in AEAs and LEAs.
- In educational administration and teacher preservice programs, include course content about how to work with and supervise paraeducators.

IHE recommendations continued

- Provide follow-up to paraeducators, teachers, and administrators upon completion of preservice program.
- Develop IHE curriculum and courses for the preservice and inservice training of paraeducators.
- Provide inservices jointly sponsored by AEAs, Iowa Department of Education, and IHEs.
- Consider incentives for encouraging participation in preservice and inservice programs, e.g., CEUs for continuing education, courses for credit, licensure.
- Provide training to paraeducators in general and special education assignments in areas such as child development, behavior management, crisis prevention and intervention, listening, confidentiality, collaboration, human relations, issues in special education, and talented and gifted education.

The IEP

What Are The Considerations For Implementing Paraprofessional* Services In Special Education?

Paraprofessional services are used to assist the teacher and to provide services to children and youth requiring special education, in both special education and general education settings.

The practice of assigning paraprofessionals to work in the general education classroom to assist children and youth who receive all or part of their special education in the general education classroom is increasing. With appropriate shared planning and supervision by general education and special education personnel, the use of paraprofessional services in inclusive classroom settings can be an asset to the entire program.

The assignment of a paraprofessional is not the only option that should be considered in planning how to provide for the needs of children and youth. Existing personnel and other resources can be utilized in a variety of ways to deliver accommodations and fulfill various roles in diverse educational settings.

The purpose of this section is to:

- assist staffing teams and individual educators in making appropriate decisions about the assignment of paraprofessionals and in planning how to implement effective paraprofessional services.
- clarify the requirements for documenting paraprofessional services on the individualized education program (IEP).
- provide information about parent issues pertaining to paraprofessional services.
- offer alternatives to the assignment of paraprofessionals to individual children and youth in educational settings.

*The term paraprofessional is used throughout this section to reflect the language in the Administrative Rules of Special Education.

Special Education Requirements For Determining The Need For Paraprofessional Services

The decision about whether to utilize paraprofessional services to assist in the implementation of IEPs is based on a variety of factors. The staffing team must identify the student's present levels of educational performance, describe the needs of the student and then plan how to meet these needs by designing goals and objectives. Once the needs, goals and objectives have been established, the IEP team determines the extent of the student's participation in general and special education. Decisions are then made about where services will be provided and how much time the student will spend in general education settings or in special education settings or in a combination of settings. Once these variables have been discussed, the team determines what services will be provided. It is at this point that the need for paraprofessional services may be explored. The actual determination of who will provide the paraeducator service is an administrative decision.

Consider alternatives to one-to-one paraprofessional assignments

There are a number of ways schools can utilize existing personnel and resources to provide additional assistance needed by a student. The support of a paraprofessional may be one alternative the team explores as a way of providing modifications that will enable the student to meet specific goals and objectives. (See "Alternatives to Providing a One-to-One Paraprofessional" on Page 24.)

Paraprofessional Services That Do Not Need To Be Included On The IEP

It is standard practice for paraprofessionals to support children and youth and assist teachers in implementing educational programs. The Rules of Special Education authorize paraprofessionals (termed "special education assistants" in the applicable rules section) to serve in this capacity (See 41.10(1) in Appendix B.)

In many situations paraprofessionals are assigned to the special education program or classroom. The paraprofessional works in the classroom and in other parts of the building supporting children and youth in special and general education environments. The children and youth benefit from the assistance and support of a paraprofessional as a routine component of that program model. When tasks and activities performed by paraprofessionals are routine aspects of the child's program and are typically implemented by the paraprofessional as a member of the educational team, those services do not need to be included on the IEP. There is no need to specifically justify the need for paraprofessional service or to define the role and function of the paraprofessional in delivering those services on the IEP. The IEPs for children and youth in these programs do not need to list the paraprofessional as part of the child's program unless there are specific circumstances that

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require the assignment of a paraprofessional to meet the student's IEP goals and objectives.

Paraprofessional Services That Must Be Planned In The IEP Process And Documented On The IEP

The assignment of the paraprofessional to perform services and tasks needs to be discussed, planned and documented as part of the IEP and individualized family service plan (IFSP) process when:

- the student requires the support of a paraprofessional to implement a health plan under the supervision of a professional. When the performance of health-related tasks is essential to health and safety of the student, the individual health care plan and the IEP must describe the duties to be performed by the paraprofessional.

Discuss strategies for increasing independence

- the student is unable to access appropriate educational services without a paraprofessional to assist with specific IEP objectives.

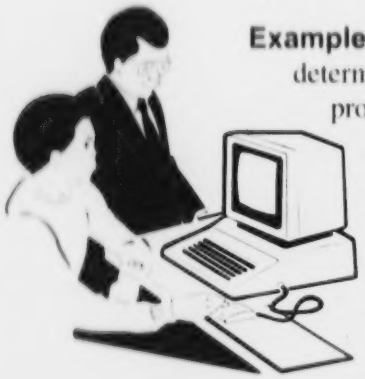
- the services of a paraprofessional are essential to implement the support and modifications needed to achieve IEP objectives and enable the student(s) to acquire a free appropriate public education.

Requirements For Documenting The Delivery Of Paraprofessional Services

Goals and Objectives: The IEP document should describe goals and objectives to meet the needs identified in the present level of educational performance (PLEP) and the appropriate person or persons to be responsible for implementing these goals and objectives. If a paraprofessional will be assigned to implement objectives, both the paraprofessional and the teacher or other licensed professional should be listed on the IEP form. Rules require that the paraprofessional be under the supervision of the licensed professional, who is appropriately authorized to provide direct services in the same area where the paraprofessional provides assistive services. (See 281-41.10 (1) in Appendix B.)

Modifications: If the staffing team determines that the student requires the assistance of additional personnel to deliver the services required to address the goals and objectives in the educational setting, this information is recorded in the Section *Modifications for Regular Education and Description of Special Education Instructional Program*. If a student is unable to access or receive educational benefit without the support of a paraprofessional and the assignment of a paraprofessional to the student's classroom/program is essential for implementing the IEP objectives, the staffing team must describe the service the paraprofessional will perform in the Modifications section of

the IEP. IEP teams should discuss strategies for increasing independence and decreasing need for individualized assistance from a paraprofessional.



Examples of modifications: 1) The staffing team determines that a special class with integration program is the appropriate special education program to meet the needs of a student. However, in addition to the classroom program, this student also requires the services of a paraprofessional to provide intensive assistance with one of his/her goals for part of the school day. 2) The staffing team determines that the student will receive all of his special education services in the general education classroom and that a paraprofessional is needed to implement specific instructional IEP goals and objectives.

Nonacademic extracurricular activities

The Administrative Rules of Special Education 281—41.40 stipulates: "In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities including meals, recess periods, and the services and activities, each agency shall ensure that each eligible individual participates with non-disabled individuals in those services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that individual." Services and activities may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, and special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the agency. A paraprofessional may be assigned to enable a student to participate in nonacademic activities if the IEP team determines that 1) the student wants to participate in the nonacademic or extracurricular activity, 2) the student could not participate without the modifications, 3) the services of the paraprofessional are required to deliver modifications.

Related Services: For the student who requires a paraprofessional to assist with or supplement the implementation of a related service, the IEP should describe the services of the paraprofessional as a Related Service. Examples of paraprofessional services that may be a related service include: speech-language associates implementing specific communication goals under the supervision of a speech-language pathologist, a certified occupational therapy assistant (COTA) implementing specific objectives under the supervision of a licensed occupational therapist, or a physical therapist assistant (PTA) implementing specific objectives under the supervision of a licensed physical therapist. (Only PTAs and COTAs who carry out therapy under the supervision and direction of a physical therapist or occupational therapist respectively should be listed on the IEP as a provider of a related service. Paraprofessionals serving in classrooms to provide assistance with therapy-related activities should not be listed as a related service but may be

listed as one of the persons responsible for implementing a specific IEP objective.)

Describing Paraprofessional Services On The IEP

The IEP document should include a written description with enough detail to provide a "picture" of the service provided by the paraprofessional, including the following:

1) a specific description of the service to be provided. The roles and functions to be performed by the paraprofessional pertaining to the goals and objectives should be listed.

2) the amount of time the paraprofessional's service will be needed. The IEP should specify an approximate schedule for when the paraprofessional will be assisting with IEP objectives.

3) the anticipated duration of the service. A paraprofessional service may be discontinued when specific skills are accomplished, when levels of independence have been achieved or when specific conditions are met.

IEP should provide a written picture

4) the location or setting where the services of the paraprofessional are to be delivered.

5) who will provide the service. The IEP should list the position of the person responsible. The name of the paraprofessional should not be listed.

6) how progress will be measured. The IEP should list the level of independence or skill acquisition that will indicate a need to revise the level of support and the type of modifications and services needed.

7) at what level of independence or skill acquisition the services of a paraprofessional will no longer be appropriate.

If the student's needs dictate that the presence of the paraprofessional is essential for the health, safety or the provision of a free appropriate public education, the IEP should specify that the student shall not participate without the presence of the paraprofessional to perform the service listed on the IEP. If the paraprofessional is not available, a trained substitute must be provided. Having the student stay home when the paraprofessional is absent is not an option.

Individual Health Plan: Children and youth requiring special health services provided by a paraprofessional have an individual written health plan. The plan, developed by licensed health personnel with the education

team, describes the services to be provided by the paraprofessional and how the paraprofessional will be trained and supervised. A written emergency plan describing the procedures to be implemented by the paraprofessional may also be warranted.

Family Requirements And Issues

Federal and state rules and regulations require that parents and, if appropriate, the student, be involved in the IEP meeting to determine the services to be provided and to discuss how the IEP objectives will be implemented. Parents should be actively involved in decision-making about:

- what services are to be provided
- determination of the appropriate least restrictive environment

Each AEA distributes parental rights information

For more information about actively involving parents in the planning of paraeducator services, see the handout section for *A Family Guide to Paraeducator Services.*

Parents may expect assurances from the local district administrator that the individual person assigned to implement paraprofessional services has been selected using local district standards of effective practices and that the paraprofessional has received appropriate training to perform his or her assignment.

Parents may not expect to be involved in the recruiting, hiring, or assignment of paraprofessionals. Local district or AEA administrators (depending on the service) are responsible for providing qualified personnel. Parents' input about the competencies they feel a paraprofessional should have to implement their child's IEP may be considered by the administrator in the process of hiring or making assignments. The establishment of the job description and position requirements are the responsibility of the administrator.

If parents disagree with the IEP recommendations concerning paraeducator service or have concerns on any other aspect of the IEP process, there are specific due process procedures available to protect their rights. Each AEA distributes parental rights information to parents or other individuals who request information regarding the due process requirements of the IEP process.

Administrator responsibilities for allocating resources and making assignments

Funding Considerations

It is not the role of the staffing team to determine the funding necessary to support the paraprofessional, to determine levels of weighting, nor to assign an individual to provide the services described in the IEP. The student is entitled to an appropriate special education program regardless of the funding mechanism. The design of the appropriate program is based on discussion of the student's needs rather than funding available. The administrator who is responsible for allocating resources, typically the building principal, deter-

mines who will provide the service, makes assignments, and acquires the fiscal resources to support the program. The extent of the individual student's program needs is reviewed by the AEA Director of Special Education or his/her designee to assign a weighted index for the generation of program funds to support special education in the local education agency.

The assignment of human resources should emphasize program needs as well as the needs of individual children and youth. Therefore paraprofessionals should typically be assigned to serve the program rather than be assigned exclusively to an individual student. An individual student's IEP may require that a paraprofessional perform specific functions to provide needed supports and accommodations. A paraprofessional may be assigned to perform those functions and to perform additional duties to support the overall program or other children and youth requiring the support of a paraprofessional.

Paraprofessional services may be supported by more than one source of funding

Paraprofessional services may be supported by more than one source of funding. For example, an individual may be supported by Title I and special education, enabling the paraprofessional to spend part of his or her work week serving children and youth and programs funded by Title I and special education resources.

Suggested Alternatives To Providing A One-To-One Paraprofessional

The practice of assigning one paraprofessional to work exclusively with one student may result in negative outcomes such as: increasing dependence of the student on the paraprofessional; creating an unwanted stigma or negative attitude of peers toward a student who has an adult in constant proximity; limiting opportunities for social interaction; and inefficient use of the paraprofessional and district resources.

Paraprofessionals can provide services to the overall program

It may be appropriate to assign paraprofessionals to the classroom or building rather than directly to the student. Unless the IEP stipulates that the student requires intensive services of significant duration, paraprofessionals may be assigned to work with other children and youth in the classrooms and perform other duties in close proximity to the student. The paraprofessionals can provide an important service to the overall program serving general education and special education children and youth.

As teachers and administrators plan for meeting the needs of individual children and youth and the overall needs of the classroom program, they should consider all possible options for using available resources. Paraprofessionals play a critical role in the successful delivery of services to individual children and youth and in the implementation of effective classroom programs. It is not the intent of this publication to suggest that paraprofessionals should be used in place of teachers or that volunteers be used in the place of trained paraprofessionals.

Possible alternatives to providing a one-to-one paraeducator include:

- peer tutoring and cooperative learning practices.
- reassigning existing paraprofessionals to help the student.
- using special education resources to increase the hours of general education paraeducators (such as Title I assistants) to address the needs of students with a disabilities in the general education setting.
- increasing training to existing staff in making accommodations.
- assigning a paraprofessional for a brief time to a student going through initial transition into a new setting.
- utilizing volunteers and foster grandparents.
- using assistive technology to assist students with taking notes.
- team teaching, with the paraprofessional alternating between two classrooms.

Considerations For Assigning And Planning Paraprofessional Services

AEAs and school districts may consider adopting a protocol for assigning and planning the services of the paraprofessional. The protocol could be submitted to the school district administrator and Director of Special Education to justify funding and to document decision-making and planning. The following items would be appropriate components for planning and documenting the responsibilities of the paraprofessional and the communication which needs to occur for effective paraprofessional services to be delivered.

Suggested protocol for planning paraprofessional services

- a copy of the IEP specifying goals, objectives, person(s) responsible, modifications, and/or related services pertaining to the roles to be performed by the paraprofessional.
- a statement clarifying the role distinctions among teachers, therapists or other licensed professionals and paraprofessionals.
- a written job assignment listing roles, responsibilities and performance expectations
- any additional accommodations or strategies needed by the student.

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- names of administrators, teachers, and/or support staff who supervise or direct the paraprofessionals; specify who is accountable for the paraprofessional services and where the paraprofessional can go for help and information about the student.

- a statement that specifies which information is confidential.

- clarification of when substitute paraprofessionals are required.

- description of training needed by the paraprofessionals and a plan for how that training will be provided.

- description of training needed by a paraprofessional substitute and a plan for how that training will be provided.

- a statement clarifying when the paraprofessional is required to work with the assigned student(s) with disabilities and when the paraprofessional may perform other assignments and duties in the classroom or other parts of the school building.

- a description of the plan for increasing independence and how the need for the paraprofessional will be decreased over time.

- a description of how and when the results (outcomes) of paraprofessional services will be evaluated. How will the educational team determine whether the assignment of the paraprofessional has yielded appropriate benefits for the student? When will the paraprofessional services be reviewed to determine whether the modifications are still appropriate?

Appendices

Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

Appendix A

Statements of Beliefs and Vision

The *Guide for Effective Paraeducator Services in Iowa* is based on the spirit and convictions expressed in the beliefs and vision statements which were developed with input from a variety of constituents. They are offered as a model for other educational agencies, such as the Iowa Department of Education, AEAs, LEAs, school buildings, colleges and universities for use in developing their own beliefs, vision and goals. The vision and beliefs are also offered to encourage groups to have important conversations and reach consensus on their commitment to improving the supports provided to paraeducators and the services provided by paraeducators.

The belief and vision statements which refer to teachers apply to both general and special education teachers, as well as to therapists and other support staff professionals. The statements also consider parents essential partners in effectively meeting the needs of children and youth.

The term "educational team" refers to the various individuals who are involved in the planning and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) and other teams that function within a school to serve children and youth with and without disabilities. An example of a typical educational team includes teacher(s), support staff (e.g., speech-language pathologists, physical therapists, etc.), paraeducator(s), the local building principal, and parents.

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Beliefs

1) The value of paraeducators and the complexity of their roles are recognized as important to the success of the school.

2) Paraeducators are respected and valued members of the educational team.

3) Paraeducators are critical to the social, emotional, academic, and vocational success of children and youth.

4) Paraeducators play an active and essential role in their work with children and youth by providing encouragement, support, assistance, and advocacy.

5) Communication among paraeducators, licensed personnel, and parents is carefully planned and carried out.

6) Paraeducators understand the needs of children and youth and have the specialized training to meet student needs.

7) All paraeducators are provided with training prior to initiating services and with ongoing staff development to keep up to date on best practices and current, effective strategies.

8) Paraeducators have a professional identity and advocate for their profession by maintaining positive, supportive, cooperative, and professional relationships.

9) Teachers, administrators and other members of the educational team enable paraeducators to be effective in their work by providing resources, support, feedback, and assistance.

10) Leaders at the state, regional, district, and building level provide the systems-level support and resources to enable paraeducators to be effective in their work.

Vision

Iowa's education systems provide quality paraeducator services which contribute to the best educational opportunities for children and youth.

This vision will be operationalized when the following goals are achieved:

1) Each AEA and LEA in Iowa has adopted and consistently implemented effective practice standards. (See chapter entitled *Suggested Guidelines for Implementation of Effective Paraeducator Services in Educational Settings.)*

2) A plan for providing coordinated, ongoing staff development for paraeducators, and the administrators and teachers who work with them, has been developed by the agencies employing the educational team. The staff development opportunities provide paraeducators with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the needs of children and youth. Staff development opportunities provide teachers and administrators with the knowledge and skills to effectively work with and supervise paraeducators.

3) School improvement efforts offer a variety of options for supporting and preparing paraeducators including support groups, study teams, and access to statewide and national networks of paraeducators and those concerned with paraeducator issues.

4) Preservice opportunities throughout the state are available to individuals interested in becoming paraeducators. During preservice training of teachers and administrators, knowledge and skills on how to effectively work with and supervise paraeducators are provided.

6) The role of a paraeducator is valued as a lifetime career. Access to training will be available to those paraeducators who wish to pursue careers in teaching or other professional careers in education.

7) Adequate recognition is given to paraeducators to enhance recruitment and ensure maximum retention of paraeducators. Pay and benefits are commensurate with experience and specialized training.

8) Paraeducators are actively supported by the teachers, administrators, other members of the educational team and each other.

9) Paraeducators are given time to actively plan and communicate with all individuals involved in the child or youth's educational program.

10) Paraeducators have the opportunity to be members of a professional organization for paraeducators at the national and state levels.

Appendix B

Statutes and Rules Related to the Employment and Training of Paraprofessionals in Educational Settings

The following statutes and rules specify the mandates, definitions and requirements that apply to personnel employed in one or more of the various paraprofessional assignments in Iowa.

Regulations For: Educational Aide
Legal Reference: 281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.4 (9)

Educational Aide:

An educational aide shall be defined as an employee or volunteer who, in the presence or absence of an instructional professional staff member but under the direction, supervision and control of the instructional professional staff, supervises students on a monitorial or service basis; and works with students in a supportive role under conditions determined by the instructional professional staff responsible for the students, but not as a substitute for, or a replacement of functions and duties of a teacher as established in subrule 12.4 (8).

Regulations For: Instructional Aide (Title I)
Legal Reference: Sec. 1119. Professional Development Handbook (E-133)

Instructional Aide:

(1) In general, if a local educational agency uses funds received under this part to employ instructional aides, the local educational agency shall ensure that such aides:

(a) possess the knowledge and skills sufficient to assist participating children in meeting the educational goals of this part;

(b) have a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, or earn either within two years of employment, except that a local educational agency may employ an instructional aide who does not meet the requirement of this subparagraph if such aide possesses proficiency in a language other than English that is needed to enhance the participation of children in programs under this part; and

(c) are under the direct supervision of a teacher who has primary responsibility for providing instructional services to eligible children.

Required For: **Paraprofessional assigned to provide assistance to professionals in special education**

Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 41.10 (1)**

Paraprofessionals:

Special education assistants may be employed to provide assistance to professionals in special education and shall:

(a) Complete appropriate preservice and continuing education specific to the functions to be performed. The agency shall make provisions for, or require such completion prior to the beginning of service wherever practicable and within a reasonable time of the beginning of service where the pre-entry completion is not practicable;

(b) Work under the supervision of professional personnel who are appropriately authorized to provide direct services in the same area where the paraprofessional provides assistive services; and

(c) Not serve as a substitute for appropriately authorized professional personnel.

41.10(2) Authorized special education assistants. Authorized special education paraprofessional personnel include:

(a) *Audiometrist* provides hearing screening and other specific hearing-related activities as assigned by the audiologist.

(b) *Educational interpreter* interprets or translates spoken language into a sign language commensurate with the receiver's language comprehension and interprets or translates sign language into spoken language.

(c) *Instructional assistants* are educational aides for special education as described in 281— subrule 12.4(9).

(d) *Occupational therapy assistant* is licensed to perform occupational therapy procedures and related tasks that have been selected and delegated by the supervising occupational therapist.

(e) *Physical therapist assistant* is licensed to perform physical therapy procedures and related tasks that have been selected and delegated by the supervising physical therapist.

(f) *Psychology assistant* collects screening data through records review, systematic behavior observations, standardized interviews, group and individual assessment techniques; implements psychological intervention plans; and maintains psychological records under supervision of the school psychologist.

(g) *Speech-language pathology assistant* provides certain language, articulation, voice and fluency activities as assigned by the supervising speech-language pathologist.

(h) *Vision assistant* provides materials in the appropriate medium for use by individuals with visual impairment including blindness and performs other duties as assigned by the supervising teacher of individuals with visual impairments.

The following statutes and rules specify the mandates and requirements to provide staff development to personnel employed in the various paraprofessional assignments in accredited educational settings in Iowa.

Required For: **Newly hired educational aides**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.4 (9)**

During the initial year of employment, an educational aide shall complete an inservice training program approved by the board as provided in subrule 12.7 (1). (See Guideline 4A in chapter entitled *Suggested Guidelines for Implementation of Effective Paraeducator Services in Educational Settings.*)

Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.7 (1)**
Staff Development Program

The board shall have a plan for staff development. The plan shall provide for the professional development needs of the instructional professional staff, the non-instructional professional staff, the support staff and educational aides. The plan shall include general goals for a three-year period and specific objectives and activities for the current school year. (See Guideline 4F in chapter entitled *Suggested Guidelines for Implementation of Effective Paraeducator Services in Educational Settings.*)

Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.7 (2)**
Budget for Staff Development

The board shall annually budget specified funds to implement the plan required in subrule 12.7 (1).

Identified Area: **At-Risk**
Required For: **All personnel**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.5 (13)**
Iowa Code SS 256.9 (31-33), 262.71, 280.91

The board shall have a plan to identify and provide special assistance to students who have difficulty mastering the language, academic, cultural, and social skills necessary to reach the educational levels of which they are capable. The plan shall accommodate students whose aspirations and achievement may be negatively affected by stereotypes linked to race, national origin, language background, gender, income, family status, and disability.

The plan shall include strategies for identifying at-risk students. These objectives shall be translated into performance objectives for all school personnel. The plan shall also include provisions for in-service training for school personnel; strategies and activities for involving and working with parents; provisions for monitoring the behavioral, social, and academic improvement of at-risk students; provisions for appropriate counseling services; strategies for coordinating school programs and community-based support services; and maintenance of integrated educational environments in compliance with federal and state nondiscrimination legislation.

Identified Area: **Hazardous Chemicals**
Required For: **All Employees**
Legal Reference: **347 Iowa Administrative Code 120.6**
Iowa Code Section 89B.10

Employers shall provide employees with information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment, and whenever a new hazard is introduced into their work area.

An employer shall provide special training when the employer either assigns an employee to a special assignment or task which increases the employee's potential exposure to a hazardous chemical.

Identified Area: **Multicultural Nonsexist Approaches to Educational Programs**
Required For: **All Staff Members**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.5 (8)**

The plan shall also include specified objectives, with implementation timelines for each component of the educational program; specific provisions for the infusion of multicultural, nonsexist concepts into each area of the curriculum developed under the provisions of subrule 12.5 (14); a description of the in-service activities planned for all staff members on multicultural, nonsexist education; and evidence of systematic input by men and women, minority groups, and the disabled in developing and implementing the plan.

Identified Area: **Technology**
Required For: **All Staff**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 12.5 (10)**

The board shall adopt a plan for the efficient and effective use of technology in the instructional program. The plan shall provide for the understanding and use of current technology by staff and students and shall include a procedure to review the district's utilization of technology as a teaching and learning tool.

Identified Area: **Special Education**
Required For: **LEA Paraprofessionals**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 41.15**
Iowa Code Section 256B, 24 CFR 300

Identified Area: **LEA Responsibilities**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Code 41.15 (5)**
Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)

The LEA, in conjunction with the AEA, the Department, or both, shall assist with the procedures and activities described in rule 41.20(256B, 34CFR300) to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel as defined in Board of Educational Examiners 282–Chapters 14 and 15, including special education and related services personnel and leadership personnel.

Identified Area: **Special Education**
Required For: **AEA Paraprofessionals**
Legal Reference: **281 Iowa Administrative Rules 41.20**
256B, 34CFR 300
Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD)

The AEA shall assist the department in the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development.

41.20 (1) *Adequate supply of qualified personnel.* Each AEA plan shall include a description of the procedures and activities the AEA will undertake to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel as defined in Board of Educational Examiners 282–Chapters 14 and 15, including special education and related services personnel and leadership personnel. The procedures and activities shall include the development, updating, and implementation of a plan that:

a. Addresses current and projected special education and related services personnel needs, including the need for leadership personnel; and

b. Coordinates and facilitates efforts among the AEAs and LEAs, institutions of higher education, and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel with disabilities.

41.20 (2) *Personnel preparation and continuing education.* Each AEA plan shall include a description of the procedures and activities the AEA will undertake to ensure that all personnel necessary to carry out the requirements of these rules are appropriately and adequately prepared. The procedures and activities shall include:

a. A system for the continuing education of general and special education and related services personnel to enable these personnel to meet the needs of eligible individuals.

b. Procedures for acquiring and disseminating to teachers, administrators, and related services personnel significant knowledge derived from education research and other sources.

c. Procedures for adopting promising practices, materials, and technology when proven effective through research and demonstration.

41.20 (3) *Data system on qualified personnel.* The procedures and activities required to ensure an adequate supply of qualified personnel shall include the development and maintenance of a system for determining, on an annual basis:

The data on special education and related services personnel required in this division shall include audiologists, consultants, counselors, diagnostic and evaluation personnel, educational strategists, itinerant teachers, educational interpreters, occupational therapists, physical education teachers, physical therapists, school psychologists, rehabilitation counselors, school social workers, special education media specialists, special education nurses, speech-language pathologists, paraprofessionals, recreation and therapeutic recreation specialists, vocational education teachers, work experience coordinators, and other instructional and non-instructional personnel.

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Identified Area: **Title I**
Required For: **Instructional Aides**
Legal Reference: **Sec. 1119. Professional Development**
Title I Handbook [20 USC 6320]

Each local educational agency receiving funds under this part, when feasible, shall include instructional aides in professional development activities. [20 USC 6320]

See Title I Handbook for required professional development activities for Title I personnel.

Optional activities for professional development of Title I instructional aides may include "the creation of career ladder programs for paraprofessionals (assisting teachers under this part) to become certified and licensed teachers."

Child Abuse Reporter Training

Child abuse reporter training required by Iowa Code Section 232.69 (3) applies to licensed school employees.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Of 1997

(14) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development— The State has in effect, consistent with the purposes of this Act and with Section 635(a)(8), a comprehensive system of personnel development that is designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified special education, regular education, and related services personnel that meets the requirements for a State improvement plan relating to personnel development in subsections (b)(2)(B) and (c)(3)(D) of Section 653.

(15) Personnel Standards —

(A) In General—The State educational agency has established and maintains standards to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.

(B) Standards Described—Such standards shall—
"(iii) allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities under this part."

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law which prohibits schools from discriminating against students on the basis of disability. Under Section 504, students are considered disabled if one of the following conditions applies:

a) presence of a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities

b) there is a record of such impairments, or

c) a student is regarded as having such an impairment

All special education students are automatically covered under 504. However, there are some students who have conditions or disabilities that require reasonable accommodations to the educational program in the form of a 504 plan but who do not require special education services. Examples would be a student with asthma or diabetes, if that condition results in a substantial barrier to a major life activity, such as walking, breathing, or learning. Services provided under 504 are typically accommodations made within the school setting at a minimal cost since there are neither federal nor state funds appropriated for 504 purposes.

Paraeducators could be involved with students receiving 504 services as part of their regular duties if assigned by their supervisor. If this is the case, the paraeducator should be fully informed of the student's particular needs and how they are to be accommodated.

Appendix C

Paraeducator Project Stakeholders

1996 Paraeducator Project Planning Committee

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Appendix D

Core Competencies For Paraeducators*

The following sections contain a list of competencies which can be used to develop curriculum and course content for paraeducator staff development. The first section contains competencies required by all paraeducators. Additional competencies for paraeducators employed in specific programs are presented in subsequent sections.

*The core competencies were generated from information provided by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

I. Core Competencies For All Paraeducators

To assist in education and related services programs for children and youth paraeducators will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the value of serving children and youth with disabilities and other special needs in integrated settings;
- an understanding of differentiated staffing patterns and the distinctions among the roles and responsibilities of professional and paraeducator personnel;
- an ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions and use problem-solving and other skills that will enable them to work as effective members of the instructional team;
- a general knowledge of the legal and human rights of children and youth and their families;
- an ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct established by the agency where they are employed;
- a sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritage, lifestyles, and value systems among the children, youth and families they serve;
- a general knowledge of

  a) patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages; and

  b) risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development;
- an ability to motivate and assist children and youth to

  a) build self-esteem,

  b) develop interpersonal skills that will help them avoid isolation in different learning and living environments, and

  c) strengthen skills to become more independent by monitoring and controlling their behavior;
- an ability to follow health, safety and emergency procedures developed by the agency where they are employed;
- an ability to use assistive technology and adaptive equipment, and provide special care or physical assistance that infants, children and/or youth may require (e.g., positioning, transferring and feeding).

II. Specific/Additional Competencies For Paraeducators in Early Intervention/Childhood or Home Instruction Programs

To assist in early childhood programs, paraeducators will demonstrate:

- an ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5;
- an ability to gather and share information with professional colleagues about the performance of individual children;
- an ability to prepare and use developmentally appropriate materials;
- an ability to communicate and work effectively with parents and other primary caregivers.

III. Specific/Additional Competencies For Paraeducators Working In Inclusive Classrooms And Programs For Children And Youth With Special Needs

To assist in integrated settings paraeducators will demonstrate:

- an ability to tutor children and youth in academic subjects and self-help skills using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers or other professional support staff;
- an ability to:
  a) gather and maintain data about the performance and behavior of individual children and youth, and
  b) confer with special and general education practitioners about student schedules, instructional goals, progress and performance;
- an ability to use developmentally and age-appropriate instructional procedures and reinforcement techniques;
- an ability to operate computers, assistive technology and adaptive equipment that will enable children and youth with disabilities and other special needs to participate more fully in general education.

IV. Specific/Additional Competencies For Paraeducators Working In Vocational Training Programs

To assist in vocational and transitional programs, paraeducators will demonstrate:

- an understanding of the distinctions among different employment models;
- an ability to participate as a member of the team responsible for transitional planning and vocational assessment for individual children and youth;
- an ability to participate in pre-employment, vocational or transitional training in classrooms or at off-campus sites;
- an ability to task-analyze job requirements, sequence the day, observe and record data, and provide training at job sites using appropriate instructional interventions;
- an ability to motivate children and youth to work;
- an ability to communicate effectively with employers and employees at worksites and personnel or members of the public in other transitional learning environments;
- an ability to modify services based on school and worksite regulatory procedures; and
- a general knowledge of:

  a) social, rehabilitation and support systems that will enable youth to participate fully in the community; and

  b) an ability to provide children and youth and parents with skills and information they can use to gain access to the services.

Appendix E

Suggested Training Topics*

Teachers and Administrators

Teachers, other licensed personnel, and administrators may need staff development to work effectively with paraeducators. The staff development could focus on improving skills in the following areas:

- Classroom management functions for teachers
- Planning and scheduling
- Communication and team building
- Directing and delegating
- Providing feedback about the paraeducator's on-the-job performance
- On-the-job training and coaching
- Characteristics of adult learners
- Interpersonal problem solving

Teachers and administrators also need to be well informed about district policies with regard to employment, confidentiality, roles and duties, placement, evaluation and training of paraeducators.

*The suggested training topics were generated from information provided by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

Paraeducators

To work effectively with children and youth, paraeducators may need staff development in the following areas:

- Behavior management and discipline
- Basic understanding of specific disabilities
- Confidentiality and ethics
- Stress management
- Child development and developmentally appropriate practice
- Blood-borne pathogens
- Specialty care: lifting, back care, etc.
- CPR
- Reporting of child abuse
- Data collection
- Benefits of inclusion
- Conflict resolution
- Instructional strategies
- First aid
- Basic computer skills

Appendix F

Suggested Code of Ethics

Ethical Responsibilities

Paraeducators must demonstrate honesty, loyalty, dependability, cooperation, accountability and a willingness to learn. The following is a suggested code of ethics for paraeducators:

Accepting Responsibilities

- Engage only in instructional and non-instructional activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, children and youth or others to your supervising teacher or other designated supervisory personnel.
- Recognize that the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions.
- Help to see that the best interests of individual children and youth are met.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about children and youth to parents.
- Maintain confidentiality about all personal information and educational records concerning children, youth and their families.

Relationships with Children and Youth and Parents

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher or support staff professional in an appropriate setting.
- Express differences of opinion with your supervising teacher or support staff professional only when children and youth are absent from the room.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel.
- Respect the dignity, privacy and individuality of all children and youth, parents and staff members.
- Be a positive role model.
- Do not engage in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, gender, cultural background or religion.

Relationship with the Teachers

- Recognize the teacher as your supervisor.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, utilize the school district's complaint/grievance procedures.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher. Do not undermine the teacher(s), or their program(s) through gossip or side-talking.

Relationship with the School

- Engage in behavior management strategies which are consistent with standards established by the local school district.
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Know and follow school policies and procedures.
- Represent the school in a positive manner.

Appendix G

Examples of Duties for Paraeducator Positions*

General Paraeducator Duties

- Bus duty (e.g., assisting drivers and students with adaptive equipment and monitoring the physical welfare of children and youth)
- Escorting children and youth from classrooms to resource rooms and other programs
- Supervising playgrounds, lunchrooms, and study halls
- Operating audio-visual and office equipment
- Recording attendance, maintaining records and other clerical tasks
- Assisting children and youth with personal and hygienic care
- Preparing training materials and maintaining supplies
- Setting up and maintaining classroom equipment and learning center
- Reinforcing lessons initiated by the teacher

Instructional Paraeducator Duties

- Tutoring individual children and youth, using instructional objectives and lessons developed by the teacher
- Assisting with supplementary work for children and youth and supervising independent study
- Administering classroom assessment instruments (spelling tests, etc.), scoring objective tests and written papers, and keeping appropriate records for teachers
- Assisting the teacher in observing, recording and charting behavior
- Implementing behavioral management strategies — using the same emphasis and techniques as the teacher
- Assisting the teacher with crisis problems and discipline

*The paraeducator duties were generated from information provided by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

- Assisting with the preparation of materials for use in specific instructional programs
- Attending staff or IEP meetings at the request of the teacher, parent or administrative personnel

Transition/Work Experience Paraeducator Duties

- Consulting with teachers and work-experience coordinator to assist with the design of individual transitional programs
- Developing instructional strategies (under the supervision of a professional practitioner) to teach children and youth to perform a job as specified by an employer
- Supervising children and youth in community-based learning environments
- Familiarizing employers and other members of the community with the special needs of children and youth
- Recording and sharing information about student performance and progress with professional practitioners
- Maintaining records about student attendance and other information required by the district or employer
- Preparing children and youth to live and work independently in the community by assisting them to learn to use public transportation, shop, and participate in recreational and social activities
- Providing information about resources and support services to children and youth and their parents that will enhance transition to the adult world
- Attending IEP and other staff meetings

Media Paraeducator Duties

- Repair and maintain audio-visual equipment
- Operate computer circulation system
- Maintain print and software collections
- Assist children and youth with research and computer applications
- Assist media specialist with operations of media center

These examples of duties could be used to develop job descriptions for different paraeducator positions.

Handouts

Guide for Effective Paraeducator Practices in Iowa

Iowa Department of Education
Division of Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

Paraeducator Fact Sheet

What do paraeducators do?

Paraeducators participate in many phases of the instructional process. Under the supervision of licensed teachers and other licensed personnel, paraeducators serve in a wide variety of roles. Examples of the work performed by paraeducators include:

1) assisting with functional assessment activities;

2) observing and recording information about student performance and behavior;

3) assisting with instruction provided to individual and small groups of children and youth;

4) providing opportunities for children and youth to practice skills in the classroom and community settings; and

5) assisting with the implementation of behavior management programs for individual children and youth.

Paraeducators provide assistance to a variety of children and youth including those with and without disabilities, those with health needs, those with limited English and others. Paraeducators work in a range of educational settings including the general education classroom, special education settings, lunchrooms, playgrounds, school buses, vocational work sites, computer labs, school media centers. Paraeducators are employed in early childhood, elementary, middle school, and secondary school programs and residential educational facilities.

Participants in focus groups for the Paraprofessional Needs Assessment Project (Hansen, 1995) reported that paraeducators in Iowa often perform many different functions and that individual paraeducators have multiple roles. Some paraeducators described their jobs as clearly defined in written job descriptions. Many respondents, however, reported that it is common for paraeducators to have only vague or generic job descriptions or no job description at all. Many paraeducators reported that they find working with children to be fulfilling and that they enjoy their jobs. Administrators and teachers who participated in focus groups indicated that paraeducators are important to the children and youth, programs, and schools they serve.

Why address paraeducator services?

At the state, AEA, LEA, and building levels, efforts are under way to improve

the quality of education by implementing a variety of innovations and reforms. Teachers are required to perform increasingly complex roles and are expected to be extensively involved in school improvement efforts aimed at increasing student achievement. An essential resource that enables teachers to successfully take on these complex functions and additional roles is the service of paraeducators. As teachers assume more responsibility and accountability for improving student progress and the quality of education, their roles are being redefined. Anna Lou Pickett, of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education at the Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, describes the roles of teachers in a changing work place (1994):

> In today's classrooms, teachers are supervisors of human resources and program managers. The term "classroom teacher" no longer adequately defines or embodies the expanding responsibilities teachers have in education. Analysis of the daily function of teachers finds that major portions of their time are spent in consultation with colleagues, program planning and administrative tasks. In addition to these programmatic duties, their responsibilities now include supervising and coordinating the work of paraprofessionals and other support personnel. They—
>
> 1) set goals and plan for paraeducators and other adults in the program;
> 2) schedule and assign duties to paraeducators;
> 3) direct and monitor the day-to-day work of paraeducators;
> 4) provide feedback about paraeducators' on-the-job performance; and
> 5) provide on-the-job coaching for paraeducators.

Data indicate that the numbers of paraeducators in Iowa's schools are increasing. While there is not specific evidence to suggest why paraeducators are being employed in greater numbers, there are several factors that may contribute to the rising numbers of paraeducators. These factors include (Pickett, 1996):

- Federal and state legislation requiring schools to provide free appropriate public education to all children and youth without regard to the cause or severity of the disability
- Increased demands for supportive services for expanding numbers of economically and other disadvantaged children and youth who are considered at risk
- Efforts to effectively integrate children and youth with disabilities into general education

- Increasing numbers of children and youth with limited English proficiency

As the population in Iowa becomes more diverse, more children are requiring individualized instruction and assistance from school personnel. With the evolving roles of teachers and other licensed staff, the utilization of paraeducator services has changed significantly. The number of paraeducators working in educational assignments in Iowa is increasing dramatically, according to several sources of data:

The Annual Condition of Education Report (1997)

State Total of FTE Instructional Aides 1996-1997 ..... 5,847.1
State Total of FTE Instructional Aides 1985-1986 ..... 2,668.6
119.1% change in FTE Aides 1985-86 to 1996-97

Local Education Agency Certified Annual Report, Special Education Supplement

A self-report of number of paraeducators *(not FTEs)* employed during school year (does not include AEAs that participate in pooling).
State Total Special Education Paraprofessionals 1996-1997..... 4,352.0
State Total Special Education Paraprofessionals 1985-1986..... 1,686.0
158% change in the number of Paraprofessionals 1985-86 to 1996-97

Title I Educational Associates

State Total FTE Educational Associates 1996-1997 ..... 156.0
State Total FTE Educational Associates 1988-1989 ..... 87.2
79% change in FTE Title I Associates 1988-89 to 1996-97

With the number of paraeducators increasing, another area of concern is the effectiveness of services provided by paraeducators. Findings from a series of focus groups suggest important issues need to be considered regarding the effective delivery of paraeducator services. The following themes from the focus group findings suggest areas which warrant examination (Hansen, 1995).

Themes from focus group findings

- *Inclusion of children and youth with disabilities has changed the roles of paraeducators.*

- *Paraeducators need training in:*
  - behavior management
  - confidentiality
  - IEP issues
    - disabilities and needs of children and youth
    - accommodations
    - teaming
    - inclusion

- *Respondents report a lack of:*
  - adequate compensation and recognition
  - adequate supervision
  - clearly defined job descriptions
  - information about IEPs and student needs
  - opportunities to plan and to discuss children and youth

- *Teachers who work with paraeducators want training in:*
  - supervision
  - communication
  - time management
  - working with experienced paraeducators

- *Parents are concerned about situations in which:*
  - paraeducators make decisions and provide services to their child with little supervision
  - paraeducators are not adequately trained
  - the roles of paraeducators are not clear
  - paraeducators lack information on their child's IEP and needs
  - paraeducators are not part of a team
  - paraeducators give their child too much help, a factor which can stigmatize the child in the general education classroom

Suggested Checklist for Principals

School principals play a critical role in supervising and supporting the work of paraeducators. The school principal may use this checklist as a tool for developing appropriate paraeducator services in his or her building.

Consider forming a building or district level committee of administrators, paraeducators, teachers, other building personnel and parents to examine building practices and plan strategies for improving paraeducator services. The committee could use the items on the checklist below or develop a checklist specifically for its school.

Yes	No	
❑	❑	Does our building have guidelines for effective paraeducator services and a code of ethics? Are team members informed about these guidelines and their ethical responsibilities?
❑	❑	Does each paraeducator in the building have a clearly defined role? Has this role been communicated to each team member?
❑	❑	Does each paraeducator in the building have a current and accurate job description?
❑	❑	Do teachers understand their responsibilities for directing the paraeducator(s), giving feedback to the paraeducator, training the paraeducator, scheduling, providing input to personnel evaluations, etc.?
❑	❑	Do paraeducators know who can provide help and support?
❑	❑	Are the responsibilities for supervising the paraeducator(s) clearly defined? Do team members know who is supposed to supervise them and do they understand the role of the supervisor?
❑	❑	Do paraeducators and teachers understand the district evaluation process?
❑	❑	Is there a process for overseeing the team process to ensure that effective practices are being followed?
❑	❑	Is there a process for keeping parents informed about the roles assigned to paraeducators?

Yes	No	
❑	❑	Are school newspapers and other correspondence delivered to each paraeducator? Is information about the work of paraeducators included in newsletters?
❑	❑	Does each paraeducator have the skills needed to meet assignments?
❑	❑	Does our building have a written staff development plan for paraeducators?
❑	❑	Has each newly hired paraeducator received the required inservice training during his or her first year?
❑	❑	Does our building have a written staff development plan for paraeducators?
❑	❑	Are the staff development needs of paraeducators assessed?
❑	❑	Are paraeducators provided with staff development in basic competencies that most paraeducators need?
❑	❑	Are paraeducators provided with staff development in areas that are specific to their individual assignments?
❑	❑	Do teachers have the skills they need to direct and support paraeducators? If not, are there staff development efforts planned to meet this need?
❑	❑	Is there time built into the schedule for paraeducators to meet with teachers to plan, maintain effective communication, and receive feedback?
❑	❑	Are there written procedures for emergencies? Have staff members been trained in how to respond to emergencies?
❑	❑	Do the paraeducators in our building receive recognition and adequate compensation for the work they do?
❑	❑	Is there anything our faculty can do to assist paraeducators who have a goal to become a teacher or to pursue some other career?
❑	❑	Are paraeducators provided with opportunities to get involved with building and district activities where their input would be valued?

A family guide to paraeducator services

Family Involvement in Planning Paraeducator Services to Implement the Individualized Education Program (IEP)

What is the role of the family in considering the need for paraeducator services?

Family members should be active participants in considering the need for paraeducator (paraprofessional) services in an individualized education program (IEP). If a student requires the services of a paraeducator to assist with the implementation of the IEP, family members need to contribute to the decision making and planning about how those services will be delivered. The following questions are intended to assist the family and other IEP team members in discussing paraeducator services.

What issues do family members and other IEP team members need to address when considering the needs of the student?

What accommodations or modifications are needed and who will deliver those accommodations?

The IEP team should specifically describe the modifications and accommodations the student needs to be successful in meeting the goals and objectives of the IEP. Once the accommodations and modifications are designed, some decisions must be made about who will work with the student to implement them. In some situations the teacher or teachers will implement the goals, objectives, accommodations and modifications. In other situations additional support may be needed. As team members plan for meeting the needs of individual students and the overall needs of the classroom program, they should consider all possible options for using available resources. The use of paraeducator services may or may not be the most appropriate option for meeting the needs of the student. (It is not the intent of this paper to suggest that paraeducators should be used in place of teachers or that volunteers be used in the place of trained paraeducators.) Possible alternatives to assigning a paraeducator include:

- using peer tutoring or cooperative learning practices.
- reassigning existing paraeducators to help the student.
- increasing training to existing staff in making accommodations.
- assigning a paraeducator for a brief time for initial transition into a new setting.
- utilizing volunteers and foster grandparents.
- using assistive technology to assist the student with taking notes.
- team teaching with the paraeducator alternating between two classrooms.

The IEP team may determine that paraeducator services are needed. It is not the role of the team members to assign an individual person to perform the identified services. That responsibility typically belongs to the building principal.

Once the decision to assign paraeducator services is made, several issues should be considered. The following information can serve as a guide to examining those issues.

If paraeducator services are determined to be the appropriate service delivery model, what questions need to be asked?

What services will be provided by the paraeducator? The IEP should include a specific description of the services the paraeducator will be expected to provide.

Where will the services be provided? The IEP should describe the educational setting in which the student will be working with the paraeducator. For example, whether the student will work with the paraeducator in the general education or the special education setting should be discussed and documented within the IEP.

How much time will the paraeducator be working with the child? The IEP should specify the approximate schedule for when the paraeducator will be assisting with IEP objectives.

How long will the services be needed? Paraeducator service may be discontinued when specific skills are accomplished, when levels of independence have been achieved, or when specific conditions are met.

Who will provide the services? The IEP should list the position of the person responsible. The name of the paraeducator should not be listed. Questions about substitutes or coverage in the event that the paraeducator is absent may need to be addressed for some students.

How will we know when the student will be able to be successful without paraeducator services? The IEP should list the level of independence or skill acquisition that will indicate the need to revise the level of support and the type of modification and services needed. Discussion at the IEP meeting might address these questions: What skills need to be accomplished before the student is able to be successful without the supports of the paraeducator? How will we know when the student has attained mastery of these skills?

Questions the family may direct to the building administrator.

Who has the responsibility for observing and evaluating whether the paraeducator is working effectively with my child?

To whom do we take concerns about paraeducator services?

What skills does the paraeducator need to work effectively with my child on IEP objectives? How will the paraeducator be trained prior to starting services? Who is going to train the paraeducator? What ongoing staff development will be provided to the paraeducator?

Questions for the family to consider to ensure effective communication throughout the school year.

Who should I call to discuss routine issues such as day-to-day care or ordinary events that arise?

Who should I call about programming issues such as my child's progress, class scheduling, instructional needs, or social interaction with peers?

How will information the paraeducator has about my child's experiences at school be shared with me?

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